

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 11-12 were rejected as indefinite. These claims were indicated to properly depend from claim 9, and have been so amended.

Claims 9, 10, 14 and 15 were allowed.

Claims 11-13 were indicated to be allowable, apart from the indefiniteness rejection.

Claims 6-8 were indicated to be directed to allowable subject matter.

The subject matter of claim 6 has been incorporated into claim 5. Allowance of claim 5 is therefore solicited.

Claim 3 now recites subject matter previously found in claims 17-18. Claim 4 corresponds to previous claim 19.

Claims 21-24 are new. No new matter is entered by way of these amendments.

Claims 1-5 and 16-20 were rejected as anticipated by BORSETH 6,375,391.

Claim 1 and its dependent claims are believed allowable.

Amended claim 1 now recites at least one riser connected to the hydrocarbon processing unit, while the lifting means connects a further riser with one end to a sub sea hydrocarbon well or manifold and with a connector end to the

complementary connector of the processing unit. In this way, a dedicated and expensive riser installation vessel can be avoided and it becomes possible to start hydrocarbon production and processing while at the same time installing the further riser during stable weather conditions. This provides for increased flexibility wherein after start of hydrocarbon production, if new field information becomes available, drilling of extra wells and connection to nearby fields can be carried out by use of the installation equipment on the vessel.

Preferably the risers extend alongside of the vessel (see the dependent claims) for easy and combined installation and production activities. In this case no central well for riser passage is required such that no large structural adjustments to the vessel design need be carried out, which could cause a weakening of the hull, and a large volume of the hull is available for storage of hydrocarbons.

In BORSETH, a semi-submersible production vessel 1 is shown having riser pipes 3 supported by a movable frame 2. The frame 2 extends through the splash zone and takes up transverse forces exerted on the risers in that zone. At the top of the risers 3 a dry Christmas tree 6 is provided and petroleum fluids are conducted via flexible U-shaped hose 18 (see Fig. 4b and BORSETH, column 8, lines 17-24) for connection to a valve on the deck 10 for processing and/or export.

No disclosure is made in BORSETH that simultaneously with production and processing of hydrocarbons from at least a first riser, a second riser may be installed by the lifting means of the present invention. Even though column 9, lines 49-59 of BORSETH state that a new well can be drilled by the drilling derrick 30 at the same time as the wellhead derrick 30' is used to complete a previously drilled well, or to set production risers 3, this does not imply that the previously drilled well is maintained in fluid connection with the processing unit. On the contrary, as all risers in BORSETH are accommodated closely together in the movable frame 2, it is much more plausible that first all risers will be installed in the frame, after which hook up of all these pre-installed risers to the processing unit takes place.

From the above, it is believed clear that claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable.

Allowance of all the claims is solicited.


Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional
fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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